



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Australian Minister for the Environment,
Heritage and the Arts

The Hon Tony Burke MP

Australian Minister for Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

12 September 2008

VICTORIA'S STATE EMBLEM HELPED IN NEW CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY FUNDING PACKAGE

One of Australia's rarest birds – Victoria's Helmeted Honeyeater – will benefit from one of ten projects across the state to share in environmental funding, the Rudd Government announced today.

The projects will include work to protect critical aquatic habitats, help landholders adapt to the changing climate, improve the recovery of endangered species and promote sustainable farming practices.

Australian Government Ministers for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, and Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Tony Burke, said the projects would be funded with \$32.3 million under the Caring for our Country package.

Minister Garrett said it was believed that about 90 Helmeted Honeyeaters remain in the wild at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and Bunyip State Forest, east of Melbourne.

The honeyeater project will create wildlife corridors for the bird and other threatened species across the state.

"Victoria has a wealth of natural assets including 11 internationally significant Ramsar wetlands and 159 nationally important wetlands - it is essential they are well managed and better protected," Mr Garrett said.

"Creating and maintaining connections between important habitat systems will be a vital element of Caring for our Country activities in Victoria's ten natural resource management regions in 2008-09," Mr Garrett said.

Minister Burke said farmers across Australia, including Victoria, were already leading the way in improved land management practices.

"Our farmers are on the front-line when it comes to the impacts of climate change and we will continue to work with them to prepare for the future," Mr Burke said.

"Caring for our Country funding will help to give more landholders the skills to meet the challenges of the future while increasing productivity."

The \$2.25 billion Caring for our Country package is a five-year initiative to deliver a new, coordinated approach to environmental management in Australia, built on a set of consistent national targets.

It is part of the Rudd Government's plans to assist our primary industries and the environment to adapt to a changing climate.

For more information visit www.nrm.gov.au

Victoria Region Summaries Caring for our Country 2008-09

Corangamite: \$3.05 million

Corangamite regional body has developed a package of investments which balances conservation with production interests. Sustainable dryland and irrigated farming practices will be promoted and a specific program will enhance community skills, knowledge and engagement in resource management. Biodiversity and critical aquatic habitats will also be protected and enhanced. Examples include Ramsar wetlands, Corangamite Lake systems, Volcanic Plains grasslands and the Western Shore and Bellarine coastal dune and estuaries. *For more information contact Donna Digby on (03) 5232 9121 or visit www.ccma.vic.gov.au*

East Gippsland: \$2.35 million

Key activities include reducing the flow of nutrients and sediments into the Gippsland Lakes by excluding stock and undertaking revegetation works, protecting biodiversity through conservation covenants, land management agreements and incentive grants and protection of threatened species such as the Metallic Sun Orchid, Swamp Everlasting, Long-footed Potoroo and Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby and undertaking fencing and other environmental works to protect East Gippsland's coastal areas. Wind and water erosion will be reduced through improved land and vegetation cover management. *For more information contact Russell Broomhall on (03) 5150 3566 or visit www.egcma.vic.gov.au*

Glenelg Hopkins: \$3.25 million

Key activities include building the capacity of landholders to adapt to changing climatic conditions and sustain soil health to maintain productivity; providing education and training to community groups; implementing the Coastal and Estuarine Program which focuses on securing the long-term viability of key habitat areas and species; and the removal of significant barriers to allow fish passage from the Southern Ocean to the upper reaches of the Glenelg River. Work will also be undertaken to protect and enhance waterways, wetlands and threatened flora and fauna in the nationally recognised biodiversity hotspot of the Victorian Volcanic Plains. *For more information contact Richard Zerbe on (03) 5571 2526 or visit www.ghcma.vic.gov.au*

Goulburn Broken: \$4.45 million

Key activities include protection and recovery action for threatened and endangered species such as the Regent Honeyeater and the Mountain Pygmy Possum. Management of dryland salinity and sustainable farm practices will be improved through on-ground works, whole farm planning, and Landcare facilitation. Programs will also help to protect streams and wetlands within the Murray and lower Goulburn river floodplains and tackle the restoration of degraded waterways, including planting vegetation to protect water quality and biodiversity and protecting native vegetation through revegetation, fencing and off-stream erosion works. *For more information contact Megan McFarlane on (03) 5820 1100 or visit www.gbcma.vic.gov.au*

Mallee: \$3.52 million

The Mallee regional body has developed a package of investments which balances conservation with production interests. Key activities include securing permanent protection of native vegetation, including native pine woodlands, through implementation of conservation covenants, management of water quality through fencing of river frontages,

engagement of Indigenous communities in land management activities within the region and provision of technical support to landholders and community groups to implement sustainable landscape management processes. *For more information contact Grant Brooks on (03) 5051 4384 or visit www.malleecma.vic.gov.au*

North Central: \$3.65 million

Funds will be used to protect and enhance biodiversity, critical aquatic habitats and sustainable farm practices. Key assets to be protected include the Boort Lakes wetland systems, Black Box woodlands, Avoca marshes and Patho Plains grasslands. Sustainable dryland and irrigated farming practices will be encouraged and programs will enhance community skills, knowledge and engagement in resource management. *For more information contact Melissa Donaldson on (03) 5440 1806 or visit www.nccma.vic.gov.au*

North East: \$2.61 million

Funding will target the region's highest value natural assets, including those in the Ovens, Keiwa and King River areas, the Victorian Alps and the Warby Ranges district. Key activities will protect, improve and revegetate important habitat, protect priority wetlands and build the capacity of farmers, landholders and the broader community to manage their land and natural assets in a sustainable way with emphasis on soil health, soil conservation, salinity and biodiversity. *For more information contact Geoff Robinson on (02) 6043 7600 or visit www.necma.vic.gov.au*

Port Phillip and Westernport: \$3.15 million

Funding will be used to strengthen Landcare support and progress environmental projects that improve biodiversity and sustainable agriculture across the region. Other key activities include protecting critically endangered flora and fauna such as the Helmeted Honeyeater, protecting priority wetlands and providing support to the local community to increase knowledge and participation in caring for priority native vegetation, wildlife and waterways. *For more information contact Stephen Thuan on (03) 8781 7921 or visit www.ppwcm.vic.gov.au*

West Gippsland: \$3.06 million

Key activities include support and training to enhance community awareness of the impacts of inappropriate land management practices; protection of threatened flora and fauna through the establishment of conservation covenants; development of management plans for foreshore, significant wetlands, coastal areas and the Ramsar listed Corner Inlet through reduction in sediments and nutrients; and water quality monitoring in Lake Wellington. *For more information contact Martin Fuller on (03) 5662 4555 or visit www.wgcm.vic.gov.au*

Wimmera: \$3.28 million

Key activities include protecting threatened species such as the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo; providing education and training on biodiversity protection and enhancement to community groups; undertaking activities to improve water quality and address threats including salinity and sedimentation; and implementing programs delivering sustainable farm practices such as the retention of crop residues and the maintenance of soil cover. *For more information contact Cathy Tischler (03) 5382 1544 or visit www.wcma.vic.gov.au*